

A decorative blue floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the central text.

This Angel Of Mine

*Inside The Fridge or
Inside My Heart - II*

Drindalis

This Angel Of Mine by Drindalis

Series: [Inside The Fridge](#) or [Inside My Heart](#) [2]

Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Aftermath of Violence, All aboard (choo choo), Hate Crimes, Homophobic Language, Homophobic Slurs, Hurt/Comfort, Insanity, M/M, Patrick Hockstetter is His Own Warning, Seriously Patrick is the conductor of the crazy train, Threats of Violence, Violence Towards Animals (non graphic)

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Henry Bowers, Mike Hanlon, Patrick Hockstetter, Reginald "Belch" Huggins, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, Victor Criss

Relationships: Bill Denbrough/St Stanley Uris (hinted at), Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-08

Updated: 2017-11-14

Packaged: 2020-02-01 19:16:07

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: Graphic Depictions Of Violence

Chapters: 4

Words: 6,360

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Sequel to 'The Worst Demons Are Human'.

Richie gets Eddie to tell him what happened leading up to being shoved into Patrick's refrigerator.

Afterwards he almost wishes he hadn't asked.

1. You Lift Me Up

Author's Note:

Hello world! This is the much requested sequel to 'The Worst Demons Are Human', where Eddie tells Richie what happened up to the point where Patrick sticks him in his refrigerator. Mind the tags and enjoy ;) (if you need some Eddie!whump, I gotcha covered.) Also just wanted to explain, in this AU, IT has not yet been discovered or dealt with, and the kids are 16-17 years old.

"Do you wanna talk about it?"

Eddie jumped, snapped out of his present daydream. He was fiddling with Richie's hair with the boy's head in his lap, the two watching a movie in Richie's basement. "Talk about what?" He asked instead. He didn't want to lose this moment, this time when Richie would actually hold still and be calm and sweet and kind.

Not that Richie wasn't always sweet and kind, but it was usually buried under layers of snark and wittiness bundled above insecurities about his home life, but regardless...

Eddie didn't want to think about the refrigerator.

Richie looked up at him, reached up and found his hand to give it a squeeze. "The junkyard. Patrick. You don't have to, I just thought. I dunno. Talkin' shit out is healthy I guess. I dunno."

Eddie made a face. "Have you been reading my mom's psych books?"

Richie stuck out his tongue. "Shut up, I got home before you the other day and I was bored. If Mrs. K wasn't napping you mighta walked into some real kinky shit when you got home, you owe those books a debt of gratitude."

Eddie rolled his eyes and prodded Richie's cheek, watched him smirk and close his eyes. It occurred to him in that moment that nobody got

to see this side of Richie, nobody besides him. He wanted to thank him for that but didn't know what to say.

'You're the best.' his mind supplied thoughtfully.

"You're the worst." He said instead. Richie cackled, grinning up at him through those coke bottle glasses.

Eddie paused, and then without even thinking about it, he was telling him everything.

He was walking to school, the chain on his bike having finally snapped from excessive use. Most of the other Losers had cars already, hell, Stan had a nice *new* car courtesy of his parents, but Eddie was still using his bike. His mother wouldn't ever let him get a job while he still lived at home, *too dangerous*, she said, so for now he was either biking or catching a ride with the others.

Today, however, he was late.

A combination of forgetting where he left his homework- *on the desk, in my bag, wait, how the hell did it get in the refrigerator?* -combined with not having any matching socks clean, and finding out his bike chain had given way sometime in the night, Eddie was going to be late for first period. He sprinted down the street, past Richie's house, saw the truck there was gone already.

Of fucking course he's on time today of all days!

He bolted past the familiar house, chest heaving and tight. He pulled his inhaler out of his pocket, having ditched the fanny pack shortly after starting high school, and took a drag, not even slowing down as he did so. It was a testament to how far he had come that he was attempting to sprint to school at all.

If he cut through the Barrens after climbing under the Kissing Bridge, he could make it before the bell.

He slowed to a jog as he found himself at the bridge, scowling at the homophobic slurs carved into sections of it.

Just a quick rest, just gotta catch my breath and then OH FUCK-

A hand had reached up from under the bridge and wrapped around his ankle. He screamed, thoughts of murderers and dirty nasty homeless people dancing in his head, and Eddie stumbled and fell.

"Heh-Hey, what do we have here?"

Eddie crawled up onto his hands and knees, mentally cursing. *Fucking hell, it's Hockstetter, I think I would have preferred a murderer-!*

He heard more laughter from under the bridge and suddenly Patrick, Henry, Belch, and Vic were all crowded around him in a tight circle.

"Aw, did I trip the little homo up? So *sorry!*" Henry laughed, giving him a sharp kick to the side. Eddie howled in pain, curling away from him by instinct, found Patrick waiting there with an unnatural grin on his face.

"He screams so prettily...let's make him do it again."

Belch and Vic shared looks for a moment, before they hauled Eddie to his feet and held him between them. He struggled, squirmed, cursed, and spat, fear and anger twisting together into a hot ball in his chest.

Henry smirked. "Somebody's a little spitfire today, huh, queer?"

"Shut the fuck up and leave me alo-ow!" A fist slammed into his teeth, splitting his lip, and he gagged for an instant at the red hot pain.

"Don't talk back to me, fagola. I just wanna know one thing. You take it from Tozier or give it?"

Eddie spat blood at him. "Take it better than you from your dad-!"

Henry's face went white with rage.

Patrick grinned, all long limbs and relaxed posture. "Looks like the little queer's picked up a few things from Tozier. You wanna be a Trashmouth? I can make you into a real Trashmouth."

Eddie froze as Patrick pulled a roll of duct tape out of his back pocket and pulled a fistful of debris from the side of the road. Leaves, cigarette butts, old scraps of candy bar wrappers long since faded in the sun, and shoved them in Eddie's mouth. He gagged and screamed but the garbage kept coming, before a wad of tape wrapped over his mouth stopped him from spitting it out. He retched and tried to claw the tape away, but Belch and Vic held him firm.

Henry laughed loudly, satisfied for the moment. "How's it taste, garbage boy?"

Eddie tried to tug free of Vic and Belch, but their arms were as solid as tree trunks. He tried to kick out but all it did was tire him out quicker.

Patrick unrolled more tape and duct taped Eddie's wrists together in front of him, an unhealthy and distinctly predatory look in his eyes. "I'll handle him from here, boys. Better hurry to school, you don't wanna be late."

Henry blinked and shot Vic and Belch confused looks. "What're you gonna do?"

Patrick snapped in an instant, face twisted in rage. His eyes looked completely unhinged, and Eddie began squirming in earnest. "I SAID I'LL HANDLE HIM!"

Henry stepped backwards instinctively, hands raised in a passive gesture. "Okay, okay, Jesus. Do you." He began to walk away, but what Patrick called out behind him made Eddie's heart freeze in his chest.

"Hey, let me borrow your pocket knife."

Eddie began to struggle more in earnest, panicked screams coming out from behind the tape. Vic and Belch shoved him into Patrick's arms, the lanky teen holding him still with only one arm. He kicked out anyways.

This didn't feel like one of the Bower's gang's usual bullying sessions. This felt like something altogether more sinister.

Henry looked hesitant, glancing over at Vic and Belch again, before Belch finally spoke up.

"I-I think faggot boy's had enough, Patrick, c'mon, let's just-"

"JUST GIVE ME THE FUCKING KNIFE!" Patrick roared, face turning red. Henry flinched slightly, shaking his head and handing over the knife.

"You're a fucking flake, Patrick. C'mon, you guys."

Eddie wanted to scream after them, beg them not to leave him with this psycho, but all too soon they had jumped into Belch's car and driven away.

Patrick grinned and opened the knife, prodding Eddie in the back with the sharp point. "Start walkin'. If you run, you're dead, got it, wheezy?"

Eddie screamed behind the tape even as Patrick smirked wickedly.

"That's what I thought, girly boy. Now, march!"

2. On A Crazy Train

Summary for the Chapter:

Eddie continues on with his story and Richie continues attempting to not go out and murder Patrick for it.

Notes for the Chapter:

Just a heads up: This chapter gets a little dark, so please mind the tags, and as always, thanks for reading! :)

Richie's soda can suddenly gave a loud *crunch* as the aluminum can gave way under the force of his clenched fist. Eddie jolted once, snapped out of his story as he quickly tugged the can out of his hand to check for any cuts.

"Damn it, Richie, you're gonna hurt yourself, you gotta be careful, tetanus is a real danger and if it goes untreated it can become necrosis and then you might have to get your hand ampu-"

Richie shook his head and reached out, pulling Eddie into a tight embrace to silence him. "That fucker. That absolute *fuck*er!"

Eddie clung tightly to Richie, breathing in his scent. "Shh, it's okay. I'm fine, now, he didn't do anything permanent-"

Richie cut him off, looking scared behind those oversized glasses. "But he could have! He could have- God, you would have just...just disappeared, and we would never...never have known what happened to you!"

Eddie hummed in agreement, having never felt safer or more loved than in this moment. "But he *didn't*. I'm alive, I'm...well, I'm not okay, I won't be for awhile, but...I'm still here."

Richie sighed heavily and held Eddie out at arm's length to get a good look at him, before tugging him in for a tight hug. "You're makin' me crazy, kid. I dunno what I'd do without you, Eddie

Spaghetti."

"Wakey wakey, Eddie Spaghetti. The fun's not even started yet!"

Eddie flinched away from Richie sharply, heaving in a quick gasp.

Richie immediately picked up on his reaction and let go of Eddie, looking concerned but unsure of how to comfort him without making his flashback worse. "What? What is it, what did I do? Are you alright? Did I scare you or something?"

The shorter of the two shook his head quickly, hands slipping into Richie's pocket for his spare inhaler and cradling it like it was a delicate thing. "I-It wasn't you, n-nothing you did, i-it was..."

He took a deep drag from his inhaler and continued telling the story.

Eddie stumbled forward, trying to go as slowly as possibly without actively angering Patrick. The tall, lanky teen had completely snapped, and Eddie didn't want to risk invoking his wrath anymore than he had by just existing.

Patrick kept right behind him, flicking the pocket knife opened and closed and grinning. "What do I have to do to get you to cry? I want to see that. I've got some ideas..."

Eddie's whole body tensed up, as if anticipating pain, only for Patrick to giggle and keep shoving him forward anytime he slowed down too much.

"Not too talkative? That's okay, I'll do all the talking."

Eddie's face burned red with embarrassment and indignation, haven given up on clawing off the tape around his lips and was instead licking the inside of the tape and pointedly trying not to think about all the germs and foreign bodies currently inside his mouth.

"I just want to try a little something. I mean, it works on rabbits, so why wouldn't it work on you?" The crazed teen stopped flicking the knife, leaving it in the open position. "How much blood do to think you can lose before you die...?"

Eddie flinched, having heard enough, and decided to take his chances. He bolted, ducking under a low hanging tree and took off. He heard Patrick give a howl of rage and sprint after him, and *no no no he was too fast-!*

Patrick tackled him to the ground with a grunt, knife still held loosely in one hand and murder in his eyes. "Ohhh, you tricky little bitch."

Eddie kicked out, striking him in the leg. He felt momentarily victory at the noise of pain it earned him, before Patrick slammed the pocket knife into his calf. He wailed in agony, the tape peeling off as he did so, and then he was vomiting into the bushes, moaning softly as the movement aggravated the wound in his leg.

Patrick sat back and laughed somewhat maniacally, staring entranced at his hands that were now covered in Eddie's blood. "S-See? You can't hurt me...you can't...*hurt* me, I'm *real!* I'm the only one who's real!"

Eddie spat weakly into the bushes, the world now seeming very faint and far away. His chest was heaving and he instinctively tried to reach for his inhaler, only to find his hands were, in fact, still taped together tightly.

Was this how he was going to die?

Abducted by a crazy kid and killed somewhere in the Barrens?

Eddie was scared, truly scared.

There was a rustling somewhere from the bushes by the Kenduskeag.

Patrick's head darted up towards the noise, eyes manic and relaxed at the same time as he thoughtlessly tore the pocket knife out of Eddie's leg. The asthmatic teenager screamed again, his head falling back against the dirt as he momentarily lost consciousness.

"Come out, come out, whoever you are..." Patrick sang mockingly, heading off towards the noise. Eddie coughed and wheezed weakly from his spot on the ground, looking up with bleary eyes. He couldn't see where Patrick had gone. If only his leg wasn't hurting so bad that

he couldn't think...!

All too soon, Patrick had returned, an unsatisfied look on his face. "Just a turtle." He grumbled under his breath. "Got away before I could catch it."

He crouched down next to Eddie and grinned, reaching out to knock on the side of the short boy's head with his knuckles. "Wakey wakey, Eddie Spaghetti. The fun's not even started yet."

At this, Eddie twisted his face into a scowl, his anger giving him energy as he spat garbage and residual vomit at the older boy. "D-Don't *call me that!*"

Patrick didn't even flinch as the mess hit his pant leg, smirking even wider. Unnaturally wide.

"Aw, but you let your little motormouth boyfriend call you that, don't you? Besides, I can call you whatever I want. I get to choose what happens to you now, *Eddie Spaghetti*. Your life is in my hands. I'm your new god." He laughed loudly, an unnatural thing, a hoot and a chuckle that abruptly faded to dead seriousness in an instant.

"That little boyfriend of yours...I wonder what he screams like? He always talks so fucking big, but I bet he cries just like a dying rabbit. Maybe after I'm done with you, he'll get a turn, too."

Eddie saw red.

"Don't you fucking touch him, you psycho!" He screamed, swinging out with his hands still taped together. He connected solidly with Patrick's jaw, and the older boy's head snapped to the side. Patrick's eyes widened in horror, reaching a trembling hand up to touch the blood leaking from his own split lip.

"Y...You.... you just....that.... that *hurt...*"

"Leave Richie the *fuck* alone!" Eddie cried, narrowing his eyes and doing his best to scoot himself backwards and away, but it was like Patrick didn't even notice him, too entranced by his own injury.

"You...you *can't* hurt me! You can't! You're not real enough!

Only...only *I* am real! But...you did!" He turned frantic eyes over to Eddie, teeth showing as he scowled. *"How did you hurt me? How!? Are you...no...! You're...you're... real?"*

Eddie didn't know what Patrick was sputtering about, but he knew he was in even deeper trouble than before when the taller teen let out a guttural roar and threw himself at Eddie, hands clenched around his throat.

"You can't be real, you don't matter, only I matter!" he screamed, pounding Eddie's head into the dirt. Eddie choked and gasped for air, struggling in earnest. Darkness began to creep in around his vision and he tried to scream, but only the faintest of choked off whines were audible. Even as he felt the blood rush to his head, his eyes bulging, all he could think about was that he wouldn't ever see Richie, nor any of the other Losers, ever again.

"Hey, Eds?"

"Richie, I've told you, my name is Eddie. ED-DEE. Not Eds, or Spaghetti Man, or anything else that is not 'Eddie'."

"What about-"

"NO."

Patrick was screaming something at him, but he couldn't hear over his heartbeat thundering in his ears, slowing, slowing...

"Richie, what's wrong? You've been quiet today, that's a sign of the apocalypse."

*"Ladies and gentlemen, he's got looks **and** wits? What did I ever do to be so lucky?"*

"Richie..."

"Okay, okay, fine. I've just got...I dunno, this weird feeling. Like something's gonna go wrong. Like something...bad is gonna happen to one of us, maybe all of us."

"I mean, it is meatloaf day in the cafeteria, so you're not wrong there."

"You're acting awfully sassy lately, Spaghetti Man, maybe I'm rubbing off on you. Heh heh, get it? Rubbing off-?"

"Beep beep, Richie!"

He wouldn't ever hear Richie call him a dumb nickname ever again.

He wouldn't get to hug him or help him sneak into his window late at night or comfort him when his parents got to be too much.

A single tear trickled down his cheek, and that's when Patrick released his death grip and stared.

He reached out and brushed his finger delicately over the tear track, mouth slowly twisting into a grin. "...you're real, and you can hurt me. But I'm real too, so I can hurt you right back!"

He sat back and watched Eddie cough and gasp for breath, smirking as he pulled out the duct tape again and began to wrap it around the still bleeding stab wound in his leg. "Don't want you to die too soon. No fun, that way. I know the perfect place for you, wheezy...I've never done this to someone who's real before..."

With a grin alight on his crazy features, Patrick began to drag Eddie towards the junkyard.

3. Count On It

Summary for the Chapter:

Eddie reminisces on being patched up by Bill, Bev, and Richie. He also admits the one thing he doesn't want to think about, (doesn't want to remember) about the Fridge Incident.

Notes for the Chapter:

Hello lovelies! Sorry for the wait on this chapter, I just wanted to write in some fluff/'Eddie getting taken care of' because he gets too much shit in this story *** The quote 'My baby ears hurt' is from Finn Wolfhard playing video games with the Game Grumps and it's the best thing I've ever seen. :3 Thanks for reading!

Richie reached out a gentle hand to brush his fingertips across the dark bruises around Eddie's throat. "G...God, Eddie...I'm so fucking sorry."

Eddie reached up and gave his hand a squeeze, his voice still slightly raspy. "What are you sorry for?"

Richie interlaced their fingers and gave a squeeze of his own, sighing and looking miserable. "I dunno, for not being home that morning. For not noticing you weren't in class right away. For letting you get hurt..."

Eddie interrupted, a sad sort of smile on his face. "I'm sorry too."

Richie blinked and did a double take. "You're sorry? What the hell are *you* sorry for?"

Eddie began counting things off on his fingers. "Sorry for being born gay, sorry for taking a shortcut, sorry for the rust on your pickup's passenger door, sorry that somebody jammed a half dollar coin into the quarter slot on your favorite pinball machine and broke it-"

Richie shook his head once, messy black curls falling into his eyes. "I don't get it, Spaghetti Man. None of those things are your fault. None of them are things you can control."

Eddie arched an eyebrow and waited in silence.

"Oh." Richie said softly. "I guess I see your point, but I still feel bad."

"You can feel bad about it, if you wanna. You just aren't allowed to feel like it was your fault, because it wasn't. It was Patrick's fault." Eddie spoke, licking his chapped lips and finger itching for his fanny pack, he used to keep chapstick and all sorts of useful things in there-

Richie sat up now, looking upset. "The only things I don't understand...why won't you let me call the police? Why wouldn't you let us take you to the hospital?"

Eddie blinked, thinking back to only a few hours after he had been yanked from the fridge.

Beverly was freaking out, peeling the duct tape around his leg off as gently as she could while Bill went and fetched his truck so that Eddie wouldn't have to be moved very far.

"He stabbed you? That dirty son of a-" Richie cut himself off as Eddie gave a howl, the tape finally coming free and tearing the freshly clotted blood with it.

Beverly set the tape aside and dug through her pockets for anything useful, coming up with just a wrinkled pack of cigarettes. She cursed, tearing the bottom part of her long flowing blouse into thin strips without hesitation, and Eddie felt an intense surge of affection for her for doing that, knowing that her father would be furious about the damaged top. She shook her head desperately even as she rewrapped the injury in the thin material. "I would trade every cigarette in the world for a bottle of disinfectant right now." She admitted softly, and Eddie laughed.

"Wuh-We need to guh-g-get you to a hoh-hosp-hospital." Bill said nervously as he jumped out of his truck, kneeling down next to Eddie, Bev, and Richie.

"No." Eddie spoke up quickly, shaking his head.

Richie bit his lip. "Dude, you're hurt, this is a little more extreme than a scrape or a bruised knee. This could get infected, or something!"

Eddie rolled his eyes over at his boyfriend with something like frustration in his eyes. "Trust me, Richie, I know all about what can happen. But I also know if my mom finds out..? She won't let it go. She's already been thinking of installing a big fancy lock on the front door, but I can't think of any good reason for it to only lock from the outside. I can't deal with that again. I won't." Eddie spoke firmly, despite the pain in his leg and the rattle to his voice from being nearly strangled to death.

Bev, Bill, and Richie all shared glances before Beverly finally spoke up. "I've got a sewing kit at my house, I've been trying to play around with designing my own clothes, but...I bet I can sew up a gash like that just as well as fabric."

Bill nodded. "Muh-My house h-has lots of muh-med-dical supplies. Wuh-We could go there."

Eddie's soft little sigh of relief made Richie fall a little bit more in love with him.

Bev stood and dusted off some dust from her knees. "Drop me off at the school, I'll change into my gym shirt so my dad doesn't freak out. I'll bike home, grab the stuff, and meet you there in a half hour."

Bill nodded and Richie helped get Eddie to his feet, enjoying the feeling of the shorter boy being so close to him even if it wasn't under the best circumstances.

In less than an hour later, Eddie was gently tracing a finger over the neat row of black stitches along his injury, the whole thing having been doused in antiseptic and anything else Richie thought would help. Eddie snickered at Richie's attempt at playing doctor, his cut glossy and slick from the six or seven different creams and antibacterial medicines Richie had put there.

"Dude I don't know what I'm doing."

"It's fine, Richie, just let me do it."

"No way, what kind of boyfriend would I be then, Eddie Spaghetti? I gotta figure this shit out for myself, just lemme read the label..."

"Richie, that's KY Jelly."

"And...?" Richie was squinting through his glasses as he read the instructions on the tube as if they held the answer to the universe.

"That's what you use to fuck somebody in the ass. Doesn't really have much application here."

The resulting look of horrified disgust as Richie threw it away from him would keep Eddie laughing for weeks whenever he looked back on it.

"OH GOD IT'S BEEN USED! Big Bill, what kind of kinky shit are you doing with my sweet innocent Stanley boy that this thing is already half empty?!"

They heard Bill laugh loudly from down the hallway.

"Muh-Maybe you shuh-should ask him yuh-yourself! I duh-don't kiss and t-tell."

Richie clamped his hands over Eddie's ears and yelled back in response. "MY SWEET LITTLE BABY EDDIEKINS CAN'T BE EXPOSED TO THIS FILTH HE'S TOO FUCKING PRECIOUS FOR THIS WORLD STOP IT RIGHT NOW."

Eddie giggled, swatting at Richie with one hand. "My baby ears hurt."

He hadn't felt so safe in a long time.

Eddie gave a soft smile at the memory. "You can't call the police because...it won't do a single bit of good."

Richie frowned, sitting up sharply. "What the hell do you mean it won't do any good? They can catch that crazy fucker Hockstetter and lock his ass up!" His brown eyes were furious behind his glasses, not at Eddie, never at Eddie, but at Patrick, at the situation.

Eddie shook his head quickly, a sort of distant look in his eyes. "They

can't."

Richie squeezed Eddie's hands, a pleading expression on his face. "Yes they *can*, Eddie, we just have to make a quick phone call, and I bet they won't even have to talk to your mother about it, and they can lock Patrick up or execute him or what the fuck ever, I don't even care, they can *do* that-"

Eddie cut him off, voice raised and desperate. "Richie, listen to me, no they *can't!* They can't arrest him or find him or do anything to him!"

Richie shook his head, not understanding, not grasping what Eddie was saying. "Why not?" He asked softly.

Eddie bit his lip and turned away, hands shaking slightly. Richie held them between his own to warm them up.

"Because Patrick Hockstetter is dead. I watched...I *watched*...while something crawled out of a sewage pipe and killed him."

4. Until Next Time

Summary for the Chapter:

Eddie finally finishes his story.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thanks to everyone for taking the time to read this, I appreciate each and every one of you. This is the last chapter of This Angel Of Mine, but if anyone is interested in me continuing this series, let me know! ;)
;) Thanks lovelies.

Eddie cut him off, voice raised and desperate. "Richie, listen to me, no they can't! They can't arrest him or find him or do anything to him!"

Richie shook his head, not understanding, not grasping what Eddie was saying. "Why not?" He asked softly.

Eddie bit his lip and turned away, hands shaking slightly. Richie held them between his own to warm them up.

"Because Patrick Hockstetter is dead. I watched...I watched something crawl out of a sewage pipe and kill him."

"Wh....what?" Richie asked, voice faint. "Are you...are you serious, Eddie? What the fuck, someone killed him? What are you talking about? Bev saw him come to school today."

Eddie shook his head quickly, hands clenching tightly around the leather of Richie's jacket as if stopping him from running away. "N-no, Richie, not someone. Some...some *thing*. It...It wasn't human, whatever it was. It was horrible. I don't know how she saw him alive, h-he's dead, I swear, I saw it!"

Richie frowned, looking slightly dubious. "I mean, are you sure? You were under a lot of stress, it could have just been in your h-"

Eddie cut him off, voice frigid. "Richie Tozier don't you dare say it

was just in my head. Don't you *dare*. I know the difference between reality and what's made up."

Richie raised his hands in a placating gesture. "Sorry, sorry, I just...I dunno. Tell me about it..? Please? Maybe I can understand better if you explain it."

Eddie sighed heavily, all of a sudden feeling very old. "It...whatever It was...It was evil. Awful. *Sick*. It was almost like a mirage, there one second and gone the next."

Richie nodded, resting his chin on Eddie's head as he gently rocked him back and forth. "Yeah? Keep talking, Eds, it's okay."

Eddie bit his lip hard but slowly began to speak.

Patrick was grinning, practically skipping with how giddy he was. Eddie lay weakly as he was dragged through the dirt, squirming slightly but unable to put up a strong fight due to the blood loss from his stab wound.

"...st'p it..." he moaned softly, eyes fluttering half open.

Patrick remained quiet, dragging Eddie as if he weighed nothing over the hill and towards the junkyard.

"Know just where to put you, oh yes I do, hee hee!" He giggled, the mania in his eyes just as thick as it had always been. Eddie cringed and forced his head up to see where they were heading.

They were in the junkyard, and Patrick seemed to be dragging him towards an old rusty refrigerator.

His eyes crinkled in confusion, not understanding. "Wh...wha...?"

Patrick dropped his legs and they flopped bonelessly on the ground. "Wakey wakey, eggs and bakey~! No sense in going to sleep on me, now, Kaspbrak. Got a special place just for you to nap. Forever, if you want. Ha ha ha!"

He was fiddling with some sort of padlock on the door, slowly

peering inside. A dark colored rabbit suddenly shot out of the fridge, darting up and over piles of garbage and waste. It left tiny red footprints behind.

"Aw, damn it. Oh well, guess you get the place all to yourself. Lucky you!" Patrick shook his head, crouching and dragging Eddie's face through the dirt as he began to shove him into the fridge.

Only then did Eddie began to scream, struggling and kicking out. He wouldn't do this, wouldn't die in a fridge without so much as a fight. He got a solid kick to Patrick's chest, but Patrick had closed the door halfway and braced his feet up against something heavy on the other side, using leverage to try and shut the door on him.

Eddie put his feet up against the inside of the fridge door, holding it open with as much strength as he could, back pressed against the wall and his duct taped wrists held against his chest. The smell inside was awful, it smelled like decay, wet animal, and strangely enough, thick buttery popcorn. The bottom of the fridge was lined with a thick coagulated layer of black dried blood, and Eddie's hysterical mind noticed the claw marks on the inside of the door.

"Ghhrrgh, fucking...quit...fighting!" Patrick hissed, shoving harder against the door. Eddie bit his lip as he stubbornly refused to give up, because he knew to give up would mean dying a horrible death in this fridge.

"F...Fuck you-!" Eddie threw back, hands clenching around nothing as he kept pulling at the tape.

Suddenly, the pushing stopped, and Eddie nearly broke his neck as the door flung open roughly and he landed awkwardly amongst the old blood, elbow hitting the door hard.

Patrick was...

He was staring at something, gawking at it with his crazy eyes bugged out, jaw slack with disbelief...and fear?

About forty feet away from them, crawling out of the sewage pipe by the river that flowed along the junkyard's eastern border, was...

A clown?

It didn't look like any clown Eddie had ever seen before. It's suit was pale silver, old fashioned looking, with orange fluffy pom poms up the chest. It was holding a single red balloon in front of It's face.

"Don'tcha want a balloon, Patrick?"

The clown let go of the balloon and it floated away, as Patrick began to scream.

Instead of a clown face, It's head was small, the size of a grown man's fist, it was the head of a baby, an *infant*!

"Why didn't you love me, Patrick?" The clown asked, baby face screwed up into a wail. Patrick was trembling, hands shaking violently as he screamed back at It.

"N-no, no! You're dead! You're *dead* Avery, and I killed you! You're not *REAL*!"

Eddie's head whipped around as he made the connection. Avery Hockstetter had died of SIDS, sudden infant death syndrome. His mom had been whispering about it on the telephone to a friend of hers only a few weeks prior. Eddie had thought it was weird how Patrick hadn't seemed even the slightest bit bothered.

Now he knew why.

Suddenly the clown darted closer, and it wasn't a baby anymore, It was some sort of horrible monster with slobber dripping from It's large fangs. Without exerting any real effort, It lunged at Patrick. The bully squealed in fear and turned to run, but even as Eddie watched, dumbfounded and wheezing deliriously into his hands, this monster...

It tore Patrick's head off, without even the slightest bit of effort.

He might have screamed, but Eddie couldn't hear it over the blood rushing in his ears.

Patrick's body remained standing for a comically long amount of time, before it flopped bonelessly to the ground. The clown- and yes,

it was a clown again, painted face and all, laughed loudly and began to feast. Blood and pieces of flesh splattered everywhere, hitting the grass with a sick sort of sound that he didn't think he could ever forget.

Eddie gagged, retching, and that was when It looked up, piercing yellow eyes staring straight at him.

He felt his heart freeze to a halt in his chest.

"Something wrong, Eds? You know what it's like to have boys in your mouth, don't you, you little fag? You're just...like...me!" The clown grinned, Patrick's blood turning his sharp teeth a brilliant shade of red.

Eddie screamed fearfully and knew instinctively he couldn't outrun this awful thing, there was no way. He needed to *hide*-

He threw himself back into the fridge and tugged the door closed, holding it shut with both hands and drowning himself in darkness. This had to be some horrible nightmare, this couldn't be real...! His leg throbbed, his clothes were torn and filthy, the tape was unforgivingly tight, he was so scared, he couldn't breathe-

There was a thump outside the door, and Eddie curled in on himself, trying to stay as small as possible. He was hyperventilating, and he couldn't help but want his inhaler, even as the fridge shook violently. It was like the Paul Bunyan statue in the park had come to life and decided to play soccer with the refrigerator as a ball. No human could have moved the fridge, it was an older model made of steel. He grit his teeth and squeezed his eyes shut, begging it mentally to go away.

"I...I don't want to die like him! I don't want to die at all!" he thought desperately, as the shaking came to a sudden halt.

He opened his eyes and stared into blackness. Was...was It gone...?

The door cracked open slightly, and Eddie stopped breathing, one piercing yellow eye peeping in at him.

"Mmm...you smell so *afraid*, Eddie. I've *never* met a teenager who

smells just as scared as a child...more meat on you than a child, too..."

Eddie choked desperately, hands scrambling for his inhaler as he tried to take a frantic last drag off of it, but the object slipped from in between terrified fingers.

'Momma's boy to the end-' he thought hysterically.

The clown grinned and reached a hand into the fridge, claws erupting from the tips of the gloves, stained red with fresh blood-

-and then there was a sound of squealing tires. A vehicle had just pulled up, and was somewhat close to the entrance to the junkyard.

The clown's eyes flashed deep yellow and It scowled, slamming the door shut on Eddie, casting him once more into blackness.

He faintly heard a padlock click shut, and when he pushed on the door, it didn't open.

It didn't fucking *open-!*

Eddie screamed, the sound loud and echoing around the enclosed space as he realized that he was completely and utterly alone now, and the only person who knew where he was, was *dead*.

"HELP ME!" He screamed, his throat burning. Eddie found himself wondering how many animals had been locked in the same place he was now, how many had howled and cried and clawed at the door until they starved to death.

'Is that what's going to happen to me...? Will...will nobody notice me missing? Will Richie..?' he thought fearfully.

His thoughts drifted to the taller boy, dark curls framing a face hidden behind oversized glasses, his tongue as sharp as his wit.

If anyone would notice he was gone, it was Richie, right..?

He couldn't stop a whimper from bubbling up in his throat as the minutes rolled by slowly.

Suddenly, he could hear muffled voices, and a loud *thunk* against the door of the fridge. He recoiled instinctively, hands covering his face fearfully, wrists still bound together.

'Oh God, It came back, It's going to kill me-!'

Another dull *thunk*.

He let out a small choked noise, curling in on himself.

A final *thunk*, and this time, the door slowly swung open.

Eddie clenched his eyes shut tightly, the bright light burning his eyes as he heard a familiar voice gasp as he was dragged out and pressed tightly into a warm chest.

"Fucking Patrick, that sick twisted fuck, are you okay, Eds, oh my God I'm gonna beat his fucking ass and get him thrown in the nuthouse for this I swear, just please tell me you're okay?"

Eddie's eyes widened as Richie unpeeled the tape, hands shaking even as he grasped both sides of the taller boy's face and pressed their lips together.

"I am now."

Richie was silent, staring intently at Eddie even as the smaller of the two shrank back, looking hurt.

"I...I know how it sounds, Richie."

"It sounds crazy." Richie stated bluntly, pulling his pack of cigarettes out of his breast pocket and letting it dance between his fingers, not lighting it.

"I-I know, Richie, but please, please believe me, I'm not crazy, I-I'm not, I'm *not-!*" His breath caught in his throat and he wheezed lightly. Richie bit his lip and patted him down.

"Take it easy, Eds, where's your inhaler? Take a puff, it'll help..."

His brown eyes screwed up in confusion. "It's not here...did you lose it when Patrick dragged you through the Barrens?"

Eddie gulped in a breath, shaking his head. "N-No...I h-had it... when I was... in the fridge..."

Richie looked nervous. "I wonder if it fell out...? Let's get you to the pharmacy, they can get you another one..." He helped Eddie to his feet and pulled out the keys to his own truck, stepping outside.

Eddie froze in mid step, eyes wide and horrified as he lifted a trembling finger to point. "R-R...Richie....?!"

Richie's eyes widened as he halted too, staring. "I...I see it, Eds. I see it, too."

Tied around the antenna of Richie's truck was a single red balloon, Eddie's bloody inhaler expertly attached to the string, and dripping hot red droplets onto the pale blue paint.

Emblazoned across the balloon were the words *'Until Next Time, Eddie Spaghetti!'*